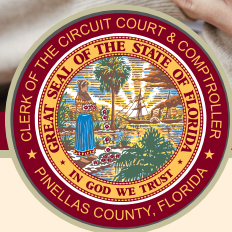
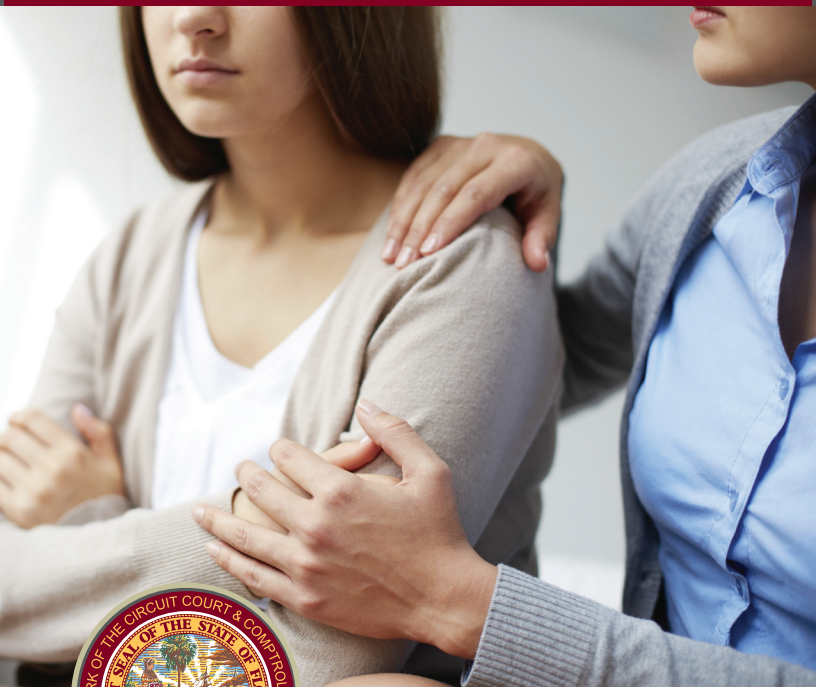


BAKER ACT: AN EX PARTE PETITION FOR INVOLUNTARY EXAMINATION

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Also called an Ex Parte Baker Act, a Baker Act is a means of providing individuals with emergency services and temporary detention for mental health evaluation and treatment when required.

KEN BURKE, CPA
CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT
AND COMPTROLLER
PINELLAS COUNTY, FLORIDA

BAKER ACT

An Ex Parte Petition for Involuntary Examination (Baker Act) may be filed if there is reason to believe that a person is mentally ill and because of his or her mental illness:

- the person has refused voluntary examination and/or is unable to determine whether an examination is necessary,
- the person is likely to suffer from neglect and the refusal could threaten his or her well-being, or
- a substantial likelihood that without care or treatment, the person will cause serious bodily harm to him/herself or others in the near future.

The person must be in Pinellas County and his/her whereabouts must be known; the person cannot be in jail.

A Baker Act can be filed by anyone who completes a petition, as sworn written testimony, describing the person's actions which they observed and which they believe meet the above listed criteria.

Completion of the petition is a request of the court to order the person's involuntary transportation to and examination at a designated mental health facility.

If the court finds the criteria have been met, a court order will be issued authorizing the Sheriff to pick up and transport the person to the nearest designated facility. A psychiatrist must examine the person within 72 hours to determine if they need involuntary placement for treatment of mental illness. If they do, the facility will petition the court for a hearing within 72 hours.

There is no filing fee required to file a Petition for Involuntary Examination (Baker Act). You may request, complete and file a Petition for Involuntary Examination Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., at the Clerk's Clearwater Courthouse, St. Petersburg Branch and North County Branch locations.

For more information, call Probate Court Records at (727) 464-3321 or visit www.mypinellasclerk.org.

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Persons with disabilities requiring reasonable accommodations to use the services provided should call (727) 464-4062 (TDD or Voice). Call 24 hours prior to coming to the courthouse.

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